



## Ground-Breaking Performance Artist Pope.L Dies at 68, Leaving a Profound Legacy

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World-renowned performance artist Pope.L, also known as William Pope.L, passed away unexpectedly in his Chicago home on December 23 at the ripe age of 68. His death has left a gaping void in the art world, where he was celebrated for his audacious performances and innovative conceptual artworks that deeply explored race and language.

### Ground-Breaking Performances

Known for his provocative street performances, Pope.L's claim to fame was his 1978 crawl along 42nd Street in New York. This performance, along with others that involved acts of vulnerability and endurance, was instrumental in bringing critical social and racial issues to the fore. His most recent show at the South London Gallery, 'Hospital,' received critical acclaim, marking his first show at a British non-commercial institution.

### A Life Dedicated to Art and Social Commentary

Pope.L's works often addressed the condition of Black Americans, and his crawl performances, in particular, were famous for their exploration of success, suffering, and Blackness. His upbringing, which was marked by struggles including a family affected by drug addiction and homelessness, played a significant role in shaping his art. Despite these hardships, Pope.L found success in the art world, using his work to pose challenging questions about race and society, such as in 'The Black Factory' project, where he collected items from the public that represented Blackness.

### Legacy and Influence

Pope.L's influence on visual art was monumental. His career was studded with accolades, including the top prize at the Whitney Biennial in 2010 and retrospectives at the Whitney and MoMA in New York in 2019. His work, often intertwining humor with poignant social commentary, has been recognized for fundamentally challenging and altering the visual art scene in the United States over the past five decades. A memorial is planned for spring 2024 to honor his legacy and profound impact on the art world.